

WORKERS WORLD

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Sept. 9, 2010 Vol. 52, No. 35 50¢

As profitable corporation demands cuts

Strikers stand firm vs. Mott's rotten bosses

By Sue Davis
Williamson, N.Y.

Aug. 30 — Today is the 100th day that Mott's applesauce and apple juice workers have been on strike in Western New York. They'd planned a rally at 1 p.m. to commemorate their stand against corporate greed.

But an emergency meeting was called at 9 a.m. to discuss what Mike LeBerth, president of Local 220 of the Department Store union, a division of the Food and Commercial Workers union (RWDSU- UFCW), had been told was a new contract offer from the owner of Mott's, the Dr. Pepper Snapple Group.

What's new is a \$1,000 signing bonus, though DPS hadn't changed other terms: \$1.50 per hour pay cut for the first year, followed by 50-cent cuts the next two years, a pension freeze and increased health care costs.

"It was a lousy contract when we went out on May 23, and it's still lousy," LeBerth told Workers World on Aug. 29. But this morning DPS double-crossed the local by not putting the new offer in writing.

"I have no idea what's going on," said LeBerth. "As far as I'm concerned, if there's nothing in writing, it's only rumors. It's definitely disappointing that the company refuses to negotiate."

But LeBerth was pleased that more than three-quarters of the membership were at today's rally. "We showed how strong, how united we are. We're not backing down," he said. Other unionists joined the 24/7 picket line, which stretches the full length of the huge plant on Route 104 in Williamson.

Acres and acres of orchards, the trees heavy with red and golden apples, line either side of Route 104 for many, many miles. The apples will be ready for harvest in two weeks, and then they must be processed round the clock.

Though DPS has attempted to keep the highly profitable plant operating

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ON LABOR DAY

Workers need program to fight 'double-dip' threat

By Fred Goldstein

It is now the beginning of the fourth year since the housing bubble burst in August 2007, leading to the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Record amounts of money, reaching into the trillions of dollars, have been spent by the capitalist government — most of it in handouts to the banks to keep the economy from collapsing altogether.

But after the bailouts to the banks and corporations, a \$787 billion stimulus package and a year of so-called "recovery," 25 million to 30 million workers remain unemployed or in need of more hours just to survive. And now the threat of a so-called "double dip" looms on the economic horizon.

The term "double dip" is a harmless-sounding way the bosses' economists have of describing a coming new disastrous wave of layoffs and cutbacks for the working class. It refers to the lines on their charts that go up and down with production.

In the first "dip," according to government statistics, at least 8 million workers lost their jobs; millions more dropped out of the job market and millions more looking for their first job could not find work. During this first "dip," 2.3 million people lost their homes to foreclosure. Evictions are growing but their number has not been reported. More than 1.4 million workers who have been out of work for more than 99 weeks have lost their unemployment benefits. More than 6 million workers have now been unemployed for more than 6 months.

State and local budgets have been cut to the bone as banks demand their interest payments. Government workers are being laid off, furloughed and forced to take pay cuts. Schools have been shut, hospitals closed and fire departments shut down while billions of dollars are being cut from the food stamp program and millions of people have flooded into welfare programs.

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Workers World Weekly Newspaper

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Contaminated eggs highlight for-profit practices

By Betsey Piette

The outbreak of salmonella poisoning that sickened more than 1,500 people in the U.S. in August, forcing the recall of more than a half billion eggs, mandates a harder look at the combined impact of the monopolization of the poultry industry coupled with the critical lack of government oversight.

Salmonella causes fever, severe vomiting, diarrhea and abdominal pain, and can be fatal to the very young, the elderly and anyone with a weakened immune system. So far no deaths have been recorded from the current outbreak, but since only one in every 38 cases of salmonella generally gets counted in government statistics, the actual number of people impacted by the tainted eggs could be in the tens of thousands.

Outbreaks of salmonella poisoning are on the increase, sickening more than a million people in the U.S. every year. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 81 million cases of food-related illnesses occur every year across the U.S., causing 9,000 deaths.

The cause of this latest food-related health crisis appears to be the practice of cramming hundreds of thousands of egg-laying hens into wire cages, so crowded that the birds are unable to even spread their wings. More than 95 percent of all U.S. eggs are currently coming from caged hens. Odds of salmonella contamination are around 50 percent less in cage-free hens and nearly nonexistent in free-range hens.

According to United Egg Producers, an industry trade organization, as of April there were 192 egg-producing companies with flocks of 75,000 hens or more. In 1987 there were around 2,500 operations. Currently, there are 58 egg-producing companies with over a million layers and 13 companies with greater than 5 million layers.

Crowded hens, tainted eggs

Despite long-standing industry denial of any connection between salmonella outbreaks and caging of laying hens, John Robbins reported that nine scientific studies on this issue in the past five years found increased salmonella rates in eggs coming from facilities that confine hens in cages. (Huffington Post, Aug. 27)

In a video exposing the horrors of caging hens produced by the Humane Society of the United States, Paul Shapiro comments, “This isn’t a case of a couple of rotten eggs; rather it’s a case of where standard industry practices are simply rotten.”

That the egg and poultry industries have been allowed to maximize profits by minimizing health and safety standards can be linked to the complicity of the federal Food and Drug Administration, which oversees shell egg production. With only 450 inspectors to visit over 156,000 sites, most operations have gone uninspected for decades.

Funding cuts that have halved the FDA’s food safety program over the last 10 years severely limit the agency’s ability to force companies to recall unsafe products. The FDA’s long-standing practice of allowing agribusiness to “voluntarily” comply with safety measures bears an eerie similarity to recent disasters in the oil and gas industry, where the drive to maximize profits by cost-cutting measures has spelled disaster for workers and their communities.

Even though the two Iowa companies that were responsible for the recent salmonella poisoning, Wright County Eggs and Hillandale Farms, had a long history of violations, the FDA never inspected these farms.

The Washington Post on Aug. 21 published a partial list of violations against Wright County Eggs’ owner Austin “Jack” DeCoster going back to 1996 when the Labor Department fined him \$3.6 million for brutal conditions at his egg farm. DeCoster’s workers had been forced to live in trailers infested with rats and to handle manure and dead chickens with their bare hands at what then-Labor Secretary Robert Reich described as “an agricultural sweatshop.”

Environmental, labor violations

The Washington Post reported that DeCoster was also “charged by the state of Iowa for violating environmental laws because of manure runoff in rivers from his chicken and hog farm operations.” The Iowa Supreme Court later found DeCoster to be a “repeat violator” and forbid him to expand hog farming in the state.

It gets worse. In 2001, DeCoster Farms settled a \$1.5 million complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission when 11 undocumented Mexican women workers were raped and sexually assaulted by their supervisors. A year later the Occupational Safety and Health Administration fined DeCoster \$3.2 million in a lawsuit filed by Mexican workers over deplorable housing conditions.

The Ohio State Department of Agriculture revoked permits of Ohio Fresh Eggs in 2006 when it found this company failed to disclose DeCoster’s secret involvement in their operations to avoid a state background check on his Iowa violations.

Ohio Fresh Eggs, which has also incurred dozens of enforcement actions, up to seven in a single day, is co-owned by Orland Bethel, founder of Hillandale Farms, which recalled 170 million eggs in August. Hillandale Farms and Wright County Eggs purchase their chickens and feed through the same suppliers.

The recent egg recall has prompted the Obama administration to push for legislation that would require increased testing for contamination, but these regulations won’t take effect until 2012.

Public demand for safer food has led California and Michigan to pass laws phasing out the practice of caging hens. Robbins’ article in the Huffington Post notes that fast food companies, including Burger King, Subway and Wendy’s, and retailers including Wal-Mart and Trader Joe’s, are pledging to purchase or sell cage-free eggs. Hellmann’s mayo, which uses 350 million eggs a year, has announced they will go 100 percent cage free.

As long as the drive to maximize profits propels food production and not the desire to guarantee healthy and safe products, the age-old question of whether the chicken or egg came first gives ground to the modern-day dilemma of whether either are fit for human consumption. □

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Vol. 52, No. 35 • Sept. 9, 2010
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Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly except the first week of January by WW Publishers, 55 W. 17 St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011. Phone: (212) 627-2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$25; institutions: \$35. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from University Microfilms International, 300 Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at www.workers.org/email.php.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., 5th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10011.

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Racism, hypocrisy and lies

Behind the ‘Ground Zero mosque’ frenzy

By Dolores Cox

The hullabaloo and objections to the proposed building of the Islamic Cultural Center, also known as Cordoba House or the Park 51 project, as being “insensitively” located in lower Manhattan near the World Trade Center site, are not due to concern for “the feelings of the 9/11 families.” That is not the real issue at hand.

The current uproar has now spread countrywide and is even receiving international attention. Islamophobia, escalated after the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center, represents centuries-old hatred, racism and bigotry toward “the other” that have been hallmarks of U.S. society and government.

Any group of people that doesn’t subscribe to Western or European beliefs and ideologies, or whose cultures, customs and traditions are declared “different,” is routinely demonized and depicted as “strange” and “uncivilized.” People of Middle Eastern origin are collectively branded as having “terrorist” leanings and essentially viewed as enemies of the West.

U.S. government and media propaganda and lies about the so-called “justified” wars in the Middle East have become endemic, insidious and life-threatening to all Muslims, or those perceived to be Muslims, in the U.S. The hostile atmosphere seems to be based on the premise that Muslim-Americans have fewer constitutional rights

and all are potential “terrorists.”

Europe has already begun barring minarets on top of mosques. And the Zionist settler state of Israel, the U.S. counterpart and ally in the Middle East, has for decades been occupying and forcibly annexing Palestinian territory, and destroying Muslim cemeteries and Palestinian historic sites, often replacing them with synagogues and Jewish centers.

The rhetoric of the U.S. being the land of religious freedom and tolerance is a fallacy and has repeatedly been proven to be hypocritical. These stated values are not actually practiced. Conveniently ignored is the fact that Muslims also died in the World Trade Center. And Muslims have fought and died in U.S. wars.

Hysteria, generated by a right-wing blogger referring to the cultural center as the “ground zero mosque” has spread like wild fire. Politicians of every ilk are cashing in. Racists are coming out of the woodwork; all want a piece of the action. Even so-called religious leaders have joined the fray, including the Christian right and the Jewish Anti-Defamation League. New York City Archbishop Timothy Dolan weighed in saying he thought it was “inappropriate” to build “a mosque” at that location.

The building of Catholic schools or like facilities anywhere, however, is never objected to, despite the Catholic Church’s historical participation in violence

against Indigenous people in this country and Latin America. The word “tolerance” itself comes with an implication of “putting up with someone/something different from the acceptable standard, or less desirable.”

The extent of this debate around the cultural center would lead one to believe that it’s going to be built on the actual site where the WTC twin towers once stood. Of course this isn’t the case, so it would be laughable if it weren’t so manipulative and dangerous.

Whose ‘hallowed ground’?

One has to wonder what is the radius of the so-called “hallowed ground” area of the WTC — blocks? Miles? The reference to the WTC site as “hallowed” or “holy” ground is a ploy. The reference is not only inflammatory, but dishonest.

The U.S. has a long-standing history of disrespecting and desecrating what others consider their hallowed grounds. To begin with, the WTC itself, the surrounding vicinity and all of lower Manhattan is considered ancestral sacred ground by Indigenous people. The slaughtering of innumerable Native peoples there essentially makes the entire area hallowed ground.

With the arrival of Europeans to the North American continent in the 1600s, Native lands were confiscated for the gain

of white settlers. Occupation, military conquest, colonization and ethnic cleansing resulted in the loss of two-thirds of Native lands throughout the U.S.

New York City, named by the British, is also referred to as Turtle Island by the Indigenous, a term used by First People of the U.S. for the continent of North America. Before becoming Manhattan, it was called “Mannahatta” by the Lenni Lenape people who were the original inhabitants.

In the Tottenville section of Staten Island, one of five New York City boroughs, there is a Native cemetery called Burial Ridge, the largest Native-American burial ground in the city. It was discovered, disturbed and unearthed in the 19th century. Tottenville, like most of New York City, was developed and built on land where the Indigenous lived, died and were buried.

Lower Manhattan is also a desecrated burial site and sacred ground of enslaved Africans and African descendants. The original African burial grounds occupied approximately 6.5 acres in lower Manhattan from 1626 to 1794, according to the U.S. Department of the Interior. For hundreds of years African graves have been repeatedly built upon by numerous churches, stores, synagogues, commercial offices and government buildings without any consideration given to disturbing or destroying hallowed ground. □

NYC meeting builds solidarity with Muslims



More than 100 activists came together at the Solidarity Center in New York to mobilize for a march and protest on Sept. 11 “in solidarity with our Muslim sisters and brothers,” as many who took the floor said. They were reacting to the challenge of the Tea Party and other racist forces who will gather at the World Trade Center site to protest plans to build a Muslim community center two blocks away.

Participants included community and political organizations, trade unionists, a neighborhood housing co-operative organization, student and youth organizations, immigrant rights groups, including those from majority-Muslim countries, and many individuals outraged by vicious political and media attacks on Muslims by rightists. Answering an urgent call from the International Action Center, they came from all over the metropolitan area — including New Jersey, Westchester and Long Island — to work together to counter this threat.

Some were motivated mainly by simple decency toward the Muslim people who are part of the New York community. Others saw a need to counter an incipient fascist threat based on the Tea Party’s scapegoating of Muslims in an attempt to divide the working class during the ongoing economic crisis. Many recalled how the George W. Bush administration sowed panic after 9/11 and used anti-Muslim sentiment to build for its illegal wars against Afghanistan and Iraq, and how this was an important part of U.S. war propaganda.

Some wanted to find a way to counter the Tea Party and rightist Republicans’ exploitation of the 9/11 “victims and families” to build anti-Muslim sentiment and reinforce the war drive. Others pointed to the refusal of Republicans in Congress to fund payments to the “first responders” — firefighters, medical people, cleanup workers — whose health was damaged in the toxic environment caused by the collapse of the twin towers and the subsequent cleanup.

All were united in the need to express solidarity with Muslim people. Most saw the need to build on that solidarity to unite the working class for the essential struggles for jobs, health care, education and other social benefits. Indeed, many were impatient to get back to organizing but said they realized that the racist challenge from the Tea Party, Glenn Beck, Sarah Palin and their ilk had to be countered.

After a general discussion, subgroups met to plan visibility and outreach to labor unions, communities and students.

A few of the organizations taking part were the Peoples Organization for Progress of New Jersey, the December 12 Coalition, the Bail Out the People Movement, Al-Awda, the Pakistani United Freedom Forum, the May 1 Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights, and Workers World Party.

The marchers will gather at Church Street and Park Place at 2 p.m. on Sept. 11. For more information, see iacenter.org.

— Report and photo by John Catalinotto

Gainesville, Fla.

Students, community to protest planned ‘burning of Koran’

By John Catalinotto

A tiny right-wing Christian religious sect in Gainesville, Fla., is threatening to burn copies of the Koran (Qur’an) — the central book of the Muslim religion — on Sept. 11. The local chapter of the Students for a Democratic Society at the University of Florida has called a counter-protest that has the sympathy of many students and Gainesville residents.

The sect calls itself the “Dove World Outreach Center,” a name that belies its violent plans for Sept. 11. The Dove Center has a history of anti-gay bigotry most recently directed against Gainesville’s Mayor Craig Lowe. It also dresses children in t-shirts with the vile slogan, “Islam is of the Devil” printed on them.

Gainesville SDS has its own history of activism, in its case thoroughly progressive. It led protests by students and community members against police brutality on campus after an African student, Kofi Adu-Brempong from Ghana, was shot in the face by campus police last spring. SDS has also held actions defending immigrant rights and in support of the Immokalee farm workers.

In a media advisory issued Aug. 26, the SDS chapter stated it would “stand up against the extremist sect’s plan to burn Muslim holy books,” even though there had been threats from a militia group — later withdrawn — to protect the anti-Muslim book burners.

“Despite this attempt at intimidation,” read the advisory, “Gainesville SDS is calling on all organizations opposed to this vile act of hatred in Gainesville and across Florida to join them in protesting outside the Dove World Outreach Center on 9/11.”

Workers World spoke with Gainesville SDS spokesperson Justin Wooten on Aug. 24 and asked him about the level of support for the group’s protest.

“The University of Florida campus is generally outraged at the Dove Center’s book-burning,” said Wooten. “We expect there will be a large turnout. We expect also that our friends from the police brutality protests will come out, too.

“The local media usually avoid giving the Dove Center lots of publicity. In this case, however, the strong community revulsion over the book-burning has led to widespread coverage, so everyone knows about the event,” Wooten added.

“The Muslim community is understandably concerned that the media might portray them negatively if they appeared confrontational. They have engaged instead in other types of counter-actions, like feeding the homeless and poor, to show they are an asset to the community and the university.

“The local authorities have refused to give Dove a permit to burn, which is required in Gainesville,” said Wooten. “Mayor Lowe, who Dove viciously opposed with the slogan, ‘No homo mayor,’ has also spoken out against this bigoted event. He called Dove a ‘tiny fringe group and an embarrassment to our community.’”

Lowe was the first openly gay person to be elected mayor in northern Florida, winning by a very narrow margin last April against a Republican businessman.

Local religious spokespeople have also condemned the Dove group’s plans and intend to protest, but in a symbolic way, on Sept. 12, the day after the planned book-burning. The SDS-led protest aims to be right at the scene. For more information, see sdsgainesville.blogspot.com. □

ORGANIZE THE SOUTH!

Workers, students fight Sodexo

By Roger Sikes
Atlanta

Food service and laundry workers, student organizers and Workers United of the Service Employees union descended upon Atlanta the week of Aug. 9 to culminate a summer-long program aimed at pressuring food service giant Sodexo to agree to a global card check agreement.

Sodexo is a global union-busting food service subcontractor that employs more than 120,000 workers in the United States at universities, schools, prisons and hospitals. These jobs typically don't provide affordable health care, incomes above the federal poverty level, or skill development in the workplace, especially for workers of color.

Students from universities in more than 10 states have been working alongside the Sodexo cafeteria workers at their schools in a program called the SEIU Summer Brigade. Attempting to build organizational infrastructure for the coming school year, this work included outreach to workers previously uninvolved with the campaign; building political support with local progressive politicians; and en-

gaging community groups to hold universities accountable to their socially responsible rhetoric and to pressure Sodexo into a card check neutrality agreement.

Atlanta is a hub for the Sodexo campaign because of the large number of universities involved, including Morehouse College, Emory University, Clark Atlanta University, Georgia State University and the Georgia Institute of Technology.

On Aug. 12 the group of more than 350 local and national supporters rallied outside of Clark Atlanta University, a historically Black university, to support the Sodexo workers who went public with the campaign there for the first time. The protesters then broke up into smaller groups and dispersed throughout the historic West End community of Atlanta, to engage community members in dialogue regarding the lack of good jobs in the community and the impact of international employers like Sodexo on their neighborhoods and families.

Participants reunited at Mount Moriah Baptist Church for a town hall meeting



PHOTO: ROGER SIKES

Rally supports Sodexo workers.

where workers and students shared their stories with one state senator, two members of Congress and one City Council member. The politicians pledged to meet with university presidents, to “work a day in the shoes” of a Sodexo worker and to launch an investigation into Sodexo’s labor practices and its role in the community.

The national backbone of support coupled with grassroots community organizing in Atlanta is key to building people

power in the South. This campaign is focused in key Southern cities such as Atlanta and New Orleans and connects Southern workers and students to regions with traditionally stronger union and progressive movements.

The Sodexo campaign offers an opportunity for students and workers to unite at the national level. In recent history, campus labor struggles have been isolated to campuswide or citywide organizing. The nature of this campaign facilitates cross-campus and cross-state coordination, because pressure applied to any of Sodexo’s sites will impact a national or international bargaining agreement.

Students have leverage in this situation because it is the universities that hold the contracts with Sodexo. As customers and consumers it does not bode well for the university or Sodexo if students reject the current exploitative working conditions of subcontractors like Sodexo.

United Students Against Sweatshops is working to help coordinate a national student strategy that forces universities to hold subcontractors like Sodexo accountable to certain labor standards. If Sodexo is not willing to comply, then a different subcontractor will be brought in with restructured labor standards while ensuring that the current workers are rehired. □

Postal workers march against job cuts

The Rev. Jesse Jackson marched Aug. 24 with thousands of postal workers during the American Postal Workers Union convention in Detroit. APWU and other postal workers and their supporters marched to say “no way” to the proposed five-day mail service the U.S. Postal Service management wants to implement. Getting rid of six-day service would cut tens of thousands of jobs, the majority of which are held by workers of color and women.

— Report and photo by Bryan G. Pfeifer



The real deal on jobless statistics

By Mike Gimbel

The official unemployment rate, which was 9.5 percent in July, has no credibility. It is classic “political spin” intended to fill workers’ heads with hope that a recovery is right around the corner.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics had proclaimed a 9.9 percent unemployment rate for April. This was reduced to 9.5 percent for July by artificially shrinking the number of the total workforce (employed and unemployed) by 1.15 million over these three months, from 154.71 million in April to 153.56 million in July.

Did the U.S. population actually decline precipitously in these three months? Of course not. The BLS hid the unemployed in a category entitled, “Not in the Labor Force.” Between April and July, the BLS added 1.72 million individuals to this category, while decreasing the number of the officially unemployed by 661,000 in the same period.

Only about 230,000 (this number includes retirees, for instance) should have been added to the “Not in the Labor Force” category during those three months. But instead, some 661,000 workers were simply discarded and added, as if they were garbage. Workers who have exhausted their unemployment benefits or have become discouraged, as well as

youth who have yet to find a job, are all dumped into this catch-all category as a way of hiding the true extent of the jobs crisis from the workers.

By disappearing so many unemployed, the capitalist politicians could spin fairy tales of a soon-to-arrive economic recovery.

By this writer’s estimate, some 16.8 million unemployed workers have been shunted over to the “Not in the Labor Force” category since April 2000, the point which was the peak of the last economic cycle. When added to the officially listed 14.6 million currently unemployed, the total becomes 31.4 million actually unemployed. When you then add in the 8.5 million who are working part time but want full-time work, this incredible total becomes almost 40 million distressed workers.

Another fact that jumps out at you from the BLS data is how many are working part time but want full-time work. These part-time workers dropped from 9.15 million in April to 8.5 million in July. It’s highly unlikely that all those dropped found full-time jobs. Most likely is that 623,000 of the 1.7 million added to the “Not in the Labor Force” category came from underemployed workers losing their part-time work.

The real unemployment plus underemployment rate for July becomes 23.44

percent when you include part-time workers looking for full-time jobs.

There is no light at the end of the tunnel in this capitalist economic catastrophe created by the system’s own revolutionizing of production (robotics, the Internet, etc.), which slashes the number of workers, especially skilled workers, that are needed. This revolution in production enabled the bosses to cripple unions all over the world through threats of shifting production to low-wage countries or low-wage, nonunion areas within the country. But who was left with income enough to buy the goods when unemployment left millions with no money in their pockets? In effect, the capitalists were destroying their own market.

Even the financial advisors now realize that this crisis is much worse than they had thought. In an article entitled, “The Jobless Effect: Is the Real Unemployment Rate 16.5%, 22%, or ...,” Pallavi Gogoi stated that when TechnoMetrica Market Intelligence did its July job survey, it came up with an unemployment rate in excess of 22 percent. In the same article, John Williams, founder of Shadow Government Statistics, also came up with a jobless rate of 22 percent. (Daily Finance, July 16)

While the bosses try to divide workers against each other by creating unreasonable fear of Muslims and undocumented

immigrants, the real terrorism that workers face is loss of employment, which leads to bankruptcy, foreclosures, and shattered families and shattered lives.

As labor leaders, we cannot sit back and wait for the Democratic Party politicians to come to our rescue while millions more workers lose their jobs and homes. Despite a massive effort by labor to elect Democrats in the last two elections, resulting in an overwhelming Democratic Party majority in both houses of Congress, the Employee Free Choice Act died even before it had a chance to be introduced in Congress!

All serious labor activists, community activists and left organizations need to regroup and organize so as to create a class-wide, independent, anti-racist fightback movement from below. As a first step, we need to mobilize for the massive Oct. 2 demonstration in Washington, D.C. And wouldn’t it be wonderful if millions of workers in organized labor unions across the U.S. joined their undocumented sisters and brothers on May Day — May 1, 2011 — in rallies all across the country! Wouldn’t that be a powerful statement of solidarity and worker unity!

Gimbel is chair of AFSCME Local 375’s Labor/Community Unity Committee and a co-coordinator of the May 1 Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights.

Thousands march for jobs, justice & peace

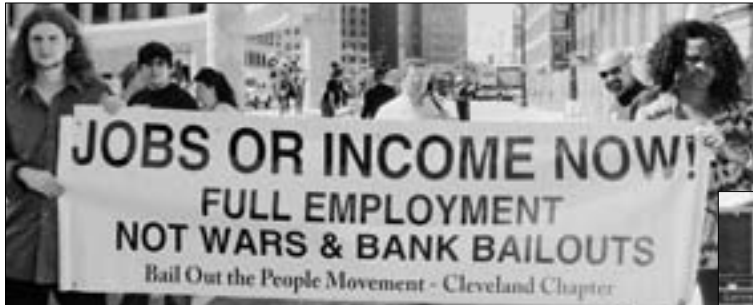
By David Sole
Detroit

Some 5,000 protesters marched and rallied in downtown Detroit on Aug. 28 demanding jobs, peace and justice. A coalition of unions, community groups and churches, called together by United Auto Workers international union President Bob King and Rainbow/PUSH leader the Rev. Jesse Jackson Sr., backed the action.

Workers and the unemployed throughout southeast Michigan were joined by delegations from Cleveland; Chicago; Toledo, Ohio; and other Midwest locations to express their anger and frustration at the economic crisis and social injustice. This was also the first time in anyone's memory that the largest unions marched against the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

Union delegations were prominent from the UAW; the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, including many city of Detroit workers facing tremendous attacks; Service Employees; and other area unions.

Many community groups participated. Arab and Muslim delegations marched along with Latinos Unidos/United of Michigan. Members of Planned Parenthood, the Coalition of Black Trade Union-



Detroit, Aug. 28.

ists and the Coalition of Labor Union Women were in the streets. Warriors on Wheels, a local disability-rights activist group, led the march just in front of the lead banner carried by the dignitaries.

The official march signs of "Rebuild America: Jobs, Justice, Peace" were supplemented throughout the crowd with hundreds of signs produced by activists from the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs and the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice.

Marchers from all over grabbed up these signs, which proclaimed "Jobs Not War!" "We Need a Massive, WPA-style Public Jobs Program Now!" "Money for our Cities, Not for War!" "Moratorium NOW! to Stop Foreclosures!" "Bring the Troops Home Now!" "Overturn Arizona Apart-

WW PHOTOS: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

heid, Jobs Not Racism!" and "Bail Out the People, Not the Banks!"

As the thousands of protesters gathered on Detroit's riverfront, activists from Moratorium NOW! and MECAWI conducted a spirited rally from the back of a pickup truck mounted with a huge loudspeaker.

Fighters against foreclosures called on the crowd to get involved in direct action against evictions and to march on the banks.

Anti-war activists explained how the cost of a jobs program, health care and education for all could be paid for by the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from around the world. A speaker from the immigrant rights struggle urged U.S.-born workers not to be fooled into thinking that immigrants were the problem.

The sound truck then positioned itself in the front of the thousands of marchers and led chants along the entire route. The crowd picked up slogans calling for jobs and education, not war, as well as many other demands.

The closing rally at Grand Circus Park featured mainly prominent religious lead-



WW PHOTO: ALAN POLLOCK

Vanessa Fluker speaking at union and community march.



ers and politicians. Many urged the militant crowd to vote Democratic in the Novem-

ber elections. But others who were very well received by the people made it clear that waging a struggle is needed. Congressperson Maxine Waters announced, "It's time to move. It's time to get up and fight. Banks — we're coming after you!"

Detroit attorney Vanessa Fluker fired up the crowd with her denunciation of the banks and the federal and state programs supposed to help workers and poor people avoid being foreclosed upon. She called on the crowd to get into the streets to directly stop foreclosures and evictions and announced a Sept. 1 demonstration at Bank of America in downtown Detroit to save the home of Michelle Hart, who was in the crowd.

Workers World Party activists passed out hundreds of leaflets for a Sept. 11 forum featuring Fred Goldstein, author of Low-Wage Capitalism, and the Sept. 18 WWP Midwest conference in Chicago. Six hundred copies of Workers World newspaper were eagerly grabbed up by marchers. □

Strikers stand firm vs. Mott's rotten bosses

Continued from page 1

with temporary labor, the untrained scabs (only 10 experienced workers have crossed the line) are producing less than a third of what Local 220 members produce. That estimate, said LeBerth, is based on the number of tractor-trailers entering and leaving the parking lot.

When will DPS figure out even the apples are siding with the workers?

How long will DPS — which banked \$555 million in 2009, with \$5.5 million in pure profit, and which gave shareholders a 67 percent raise in May — continue to lose money because of the strike?

Standing up for all workers

That's not what DPS planned when the thriving company demanded givebacks from the workers. Though contract negotiations began in late February, the company didn't reveal its "last, best, final offer" until late March. LeBerth described the meeting: As the DPS boss raised his right hand, he said, "We're here and," raising his left hand a couple of feet to the left, "the union is here. And when we're through," moving his left hand next to his right, "the union will be here standing behind us."

But DPS's hard-line class warfare has only angered and emboldened the workers, who are determined to save their union and their jobs. They know the stakes are high in this recession. But they also understand they're defending the rights of all working people by defying DPS's draconian ultimatum.

"I got an e-mail from a guy in Switzerland who thanked us for standing up for the working people of the world," said LeBerth, grinning proudly.

Support for the strike started on day one. Members of many unions around the state, including Steelworkers, Service Employees and NYS United Teachers, have rallied, marched, picketed and writ-

ten checks. Members of Xerox's UNITE HERE local held the line during this morning's meeting.

Donations of food, diapers and school supplies have poured in from local businesses, churches and food pantries. Letters of solidarity have come from unlikely sources, like the New York City Council and the Texas Congressional Committee.

DPS's anti-worker tactics started as soon as it bought Mott's from family-friendly Cadbury in 2007. "They began getting rid of family picnics, softball games, golf tournaments, the Christmas party and bonuses," said Lisa Lester, a 24-year employee. "Then they added responsibilities like QC [quality control] and maintenance with no raise in pay. It's not a fun place to work anymore."

DPS also got rid of chairs at work stations, which, said one worker, "created a prison-like atmosphere." LeBerth noted, "We grieved that, but they said, 'You have to be 100 percent totally engaged in your jobs.' But we work in high heat and there's no air conditioning or proper ventilation, though they finally put in a few fans. It's difficult for older workers to stand during a whole shift. Besides, we can do our jobs sitting down."

In contrast, the union is taking care of its own. Dale Poole, a 7-year employee who's on the hardship committee, helps dispense strike benefits. "We're making sure nobody's going to lose their house, their utilities, their car," he said. "We've been receiving hardship pay since the second week, and then unemployment insurance kicked in a month ago. That's comparable to our wages."

DPS is running out of time because the apples are ripe for picking and processing. Local 220 is determined — and prepared — to hold their picket line as long as needed to turn back this assault on their standard of living. □

In aftermath of shooting tragedy Community responds to racist media coverage

By Beverly Hiestand
Buffalo, N.Y.

Community members organized two powerful protests against the Buffalo News on Aug. 27. The anger of the community spoke truth to power about the insensitivity and racism of the Buffalo big-business-owned media. The newspaper published a front page story — with a huge headline — listing the criminal records of those who had just died or were wounded by gunshots Aug. 14 at a family party in a downtown restaurant. Four people died and another four were injured, one critically.

All of the victims were African Americans and many in the community feel that if the victims had been white, the paper would not have published such an attack on them.

The publication occurred only one day after the last funeral. Darnell Jackson, a community activist who organized one of the protests, stated, "We think the timing and the content was totally disrespectful. After the media came into our home, our churches, our communities, playing like they would have sympathy for us, they turned right around and seemed to murder us again." (Buffalo News, Aug. 27)

Protesters — including many youth — spoke about the constant negative and

disrespectful portrayal of their communities by the media. They chanted, "What do we want? Fair shot! How do we get it? Boycott!"

Erie County legislator Betty Jean Grant said it was "just incomprehensible that anybody could print that story one day after the last person was buried." Samuel L. Radford III, chair of Millions More Movement, Buffalo Committee, said, "We understand their responsibility as journalists to cover a story, but there is a way to cover a story that is respectful and sensitive to people without re-victimizing them."

One protester shouted, "There is a new wind blowing in Buffalo. We are not going to put up with this anymore!" Others cheered in agreement.

Shocked and saddened by the latest deaths, people are mobilizing to examine the causes and plan what can be done. Town meetings are occurring where the community is speaking out about the conditions that exist, especially for youth: poverty, lack of jobs, poor schools, police brutality, the high incidence of incarceration, and other forms of racism and oppression. It seems that the "new wind" in the community is the feeling that the time to just talk is over; that it is time to take action to address the impact racism has on all aspects of life here. □

Immigrant rights activists respond as Border Patrol agents flood Arizona

By Paul Teitelbaum
Tucson, Ariz.

Many people heaved a sigh of relief when a federal judge enjoined portions of Arizona’s anti-immigrant law SB 1070 in response to a lawsuit filed by the federal government. But, court order or no court order, the situation on the ground in southern Arizona has worsened. Arrests and detentions are increasing, and there are noticeably more Border Patrol agents roaming the streets of cities like Tucson, which is more than 60 miles north of the border with Mexico.

The pouring of hundreds of millions of dollars into Department of Homeland Security projects for so-called “border security” has not only allowed Immigration and Customs Enforcement to continue its terror raids but has also allowed the Border Patrol to steadily increase its number of agents and move them further and fur-



ther north, away from the border and into the cities.

Although they do not openly enforce the local laws, make traffic stops or question people on the street, there are enough BP agents available to respond to a dispatch from local police within 10 to 20 minutes. And, even though there is no “Secure Communities” or 287(g) agreement in place between the DHS and the cities of Tucson and South Tucson, cops in both these cities have been routinely calling BP agents to the scene of traffic stops. A burned-out taillight or too-dark window tinting often turns into the

nightmare of detention and deportation.

Jason Aragon, a videographer with PanLeft Productions, is also a member of Tucson’s Migra Patrol/Cop Watch project. He trains people on how to videotape and document the actions of cops and BP agents and says that in the last several weeks there has been a significant increase of phone calls from people who are stopped by city cops and have BP agents show up soon after.

Migra Patrol, he explained, dispatches between 20 and 30 people on weekend nights to respond to these types of calls for help. A Migra Patrol crew will arrive at

the scene, capture it on video and document what they see, and then upload the video to YouTube for public viewing.

Many people from the community are joining Migra Patrol to help. In an alliance with local immigrant rights group Derechos Humanos, the Yo Soy Testigo (I am a witness) campaign has been launched. Yo Soy Testigo has a 24/7 phone number of 520-261-5890 and has volunteers ready to respond. Aragon said, “This is like 911 for people stopped by the cops and border patrol. Who else can they call?” This is also the first step of people coming together to act in their own defense.

On Aug. 13 Congress allocated \$600 million and President Barack Obama signed an emergency supplemental appropriation, HR 6080, for “border security.” This money, which should be spent to keep our schools and hospitals open, will instead be used to infest our streets with more BP agents who will terrorize workers and rip families apart.

Sonoma County, Calif. Gay senior wins legal battle

By Caleb T. Maupin

The Sonoma (Calif.) County Board of Supervisors finally surrendered on Aug. 5. The board agreed to settle with Clay Greene, and he was awarded \$650,000. Clay Greene and his partner Harold Scull had been forcibly abducted by the county in April 2008. Their possessions had been auctioned off after the city terminated the lease on their home.

Greene and Scull established legal rights for themselves as a couple despite bans on lesbian and gay marriage and other efforts to prevent legal recognition of same-sex unions. The couple had been together for 25 years and granted each other power of attorney in emergency situations.

When Scull fell ill in April 2008 and was taken to the hospital, Greene was denied the right to visit his partner, despite hav-

ing legal power of attorney. When Greene attempted to gain his legally established rights, he was forced into a nursing home. Greene’s claims of unjust hospitalization were labeled “dementia,” and negative stereotypes about the elderly were used to remove his credibility and keep him locked away.

The couple were held against their will in separate hospitals. Scull died four months later, leaving Greene locked away and not even informed of his longtime partner’s death. Greene had tried to leave the nursing home where he was held, but was continually recaptured. (Bay Area Reporter Online)

In the meantime, the county confiscated and sold all the personal items inside the home that Greene and Scull had amassed together. Their collection of valuable artwork, furniture and even their two cats were auctioned off, with the proceeds going to Sonoma County. Finally, with the help of a lawyer, Greene was released from the nursing home after being held against his will for two months.

The National Center for Lesbian Rights

provided Greene with three attorneys to represent him in his struggle for compensation. One of them, Gregory Spaulding, described the process of winning justice as “very expensive.”

Fifty witnesses sent affidavits to the court and were prepared to testify on Greene’s behalf. In addition, seven expert witnesses were paid to give their input on the case and testify at trial if need be.

Claims of domestic abuse that the county used to justify the abduction were admitted to be “unfounded” by officials.

Anne Dennis, Greene’s lead attorney, commented on how Greene had become “fragile” since the death of his partner. Now that a settlement has been reached, Greene will be able to enjoy what the legal director of the NCLR, Sharon Minter, described as “the secure environment he deserves.”

The struggle to obtain justice for Greene was galvanized around the U.S. by publicity garnered on Facebook, where over 19,000 people signed on for “Justice for Clay Greene and Harold of Sonoma County, CA.” □

Workers, Immigrants, Unemployed, Youth, Students:

Capitalism is Killing the People & the Planet

If you are interested in abolishing a profit-hungry system that is:

- throwing people out of work & their homes
- closing schools and hospitals
- denying universal health care
- making war ● bailing out banks
- jailing the poor & the youth
- racial profiling Black people, Latinos/as, immigrants and all people of color
- destroying the environment with global warming & oil spills

Then it's time to stand up, unite and fight back for a socialist future!

Abolish Capitalism – Fight Injustice!

**Workers World Party
REGIONAL CONFERENCES**

Western	LOS ANGELES	Sept. 4
Southern California Library 6210 S. Vermont Ave. Registration opens at 9 a.m. Pre-register at www.workersworld.net Call: 323-515-5870; e-mail: westcoastconference@workers.org		
Midwest	CHICAGO	Sept. 18
UE Headquarters, Main Hall 37 South Ashland Ave.		
Southern	DURHAM, N.C.	Oct. 23
Marvell Event Center, 119 W. Main St., Durham, N.C.		

**WORKERS WORLD PARTY
CONFERENCE**

NOV • 12~14

save the date new york city

Forum highlights solid

By Heather Cottin
New York

Workers and activists packed the Solidarity Center Aug. 21 to participate in a forum entitled, “What are the next steps in the fight for immigrant and workers’ rights?” Speakers included representatives of community groups, unions, and workers’ and youth organizations.

Jonna Baldres from the Philippine Forum chaired the meeting. “There is a world economic crisis,” she said, “and we must be disciplined, because our enemies are disciplined. We must struggle together.” Three of the panelists had to hide their identities to avoid reprisals at work, but their message was powerful.

Several organizers in the Band of Brothers from New York’s Woodlawn Cemetery workers spoke. “I saw a rainbow one day and I thought — this rainbow is a reflection of all of us here on earth. Because we are all the colors of the rainbow, and we

are the power,” one worker said.

Faced with blatant racism and threatened with dismissal and wage reduction, the African-American workers at the cemetery banded together. “They tried to hammer us down as if we were nails. But we are men and we are not going to lie down. We are going to rise.”

Larry Holmes of the Bail Out the People Movement said: “There’s depression-level unemployment. The government is giving banks and corporations trillions while there is a hiring strike. The capitalists are cutting social programs and actually creating this crisis. How long are we going to tolerate this merciless, inhumane system?”

Holmes called for a regional peoples’ assembly on Sept. 25 to discuss strategy and tactics in the coming period.

Teresa Gutierrez, a leader in the New York May 1 Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights, which organized the forum, noted: “The issue is building unity

California's foreclosure crisis & racism

By Terri Kay
San Francisco

California is in a state of economic emergency on many fronts. Not only does official unemployment hover around 12 percent, but approximately 702,000 homes — nearly 1 in 8 — are currently in foreclosure.

Who is hurt the most from this crisis? Latino/a and African-American homeowners make up more than half of all foreclosures in California, according to a new report that looked at 600,000 foreclosures around the state.

“Dreams Deferred: Impacts and Characteristics of the California Foreclosure Crisis,” by the Center for Responsible Lending, paints a stark picture of the devastation wreaked in the state by the banks’ racist subprime mortgage schemes and resultant mass foreclosures. “Conventional” mortgages at higher interest rates were also targeted for sale to African-American and Latino/a home buyers.

The report notes: “It is well-documented that African-American and Latino families disproportionately received the most expensive and dangerous types of loans during the heyday of the subprime market. According to analyses of the Home Mortgage

Disclosure Act data, higher-rate conventional mortgages were disproportionately distributed to borrowers of color between 2004 and 2008. For example, in 2006, among consumers who received conventional mortgages for single-family homes, roughly half of African-American (53.7 percent) and Hispanic borrowers (46.5 percent) received a higher-rate mortgage compared to about one-fifth of non-Hispanic white borrowers (17.7 percent).” (responsiblelending.org/california, Aug. 17)

The report cites three key findings:

“Latino and African-American borrowers in California have experienced foreclosure rates 2.3 and 1.9 times that of non-Hispanic white borrowers. Given the high foreclosure rates for loans made in recent years and the large number of loans to Latinos in those years, almost half of all California foreclosures have been of Latino borrowers.

“The concentration and volume of California foreclosures differ dramatically by region. The Central Valley and Inland Empire have the highest concentrations of foreclosures, while the volume of foreclosures is highest in major cities, such as Los Angeles.

“Contrary to some claims, most foreclosures have not been on sprawling ‘Mc-



WW PHOTO: JOHN PARKER

Foreclosure victims in Sacramento Feb. 10 tell Gov. Schwarzenegger: ‘Terminate foreclosures!’

Mansions’ but rather on modest properties that were typically valued significantly below area median values at origination.”

From coast to coast, record foreclosures and evictions show no end in sight. In the meantime, unemployment, furloughs, lowered wages, anti-immigrant attacks and every form of racism, repression and hardship are on the rise.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, like every governor around the country, has the executive authority to declare an economic

state of emergency and impose an immediate moratorium to stop all foreclosures. This measure would cost nothing but is opposed by the banks. The one item never touched in any state budget is the interest payments and/or debt service paid to the banks.

In California the demand for an economic state of emergency and a moratorium on foreclosures and evictions is a pivotal component in the fight against racism and for jobs at living wages for all. □

For contributions to literature and struggle

San Diego weekly recognizes Leslie Feinberg

By Bob McCubbin
San Diego

Thousands of people in the U.S. and in many other parts of the world have read and been inspired by the writings of Leslie Feinberg, a transgender lesbian activist, revolutionary working-class intellectual and Workers World newspaper managing editor.

Feinberg’s lifelong defense of all gender-based and sexuality-based human variety; her scholarly explorations into the previously hidden history of transgender people and of the revolutionary working-class movements for sexual and gender liberation; and her novels, so profoundly insightful into the workings of the human heart, have brought hope for liberation to untold numbers of working-class and op-

pressed people. Feinberg’s words and actions have educated many about the need to actively struggle for a more just world.

However, on a planet still dominated by the self-serving ideologies of the billionaire capitalist class, representatives of implacable resistance to the existing order are seldom recognized, much less praised, in the mass media.

So it was very exciting to come across a fitting tribute to Feinberg in the latest issue of San Diego’s widely-read weekly, the Gay and Lesbian Times. In a feature



Sign at San Francisco Pride march 2010 depicting “Stone Butch Blues” cover with photo of Leslie Feinberg.

WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

article on “the best of GLBT literature and authors,” GLT editor Christina MacNeal offers a

concise but thorough listing of Feinberg’s published work:

“Feinberg’s first novel, ‘Stone Butch Blues,’ is widely considered a groundbreaking work about gender. Feinberg also authored two non-fiction books,

‘TransLiberation: Beyond Pink or Blue,’ and ‘Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to Dennis Rodman.’ Feinberg also wrote the novel, ‘Drag King Dreams,’ and ‘Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba,’ a compilation of 25 journalistic articles. Feinberg’s partner is the prominent lesbian poet-activist Minnie Bruce Pratt. Feinberg’s writings on GLBT history, ‘Lavender & Red,’ frequently appear in the Workers World newspaper.”

Finally, and very importantly, the article recognizes that, in addition to her literary contributions, Feinberg is an activist and a speaker. MacNeal concludes by calling Feinberg a “true pioneer and community advocate.”

The online version of “An appreciation of the best of GLBT literature and authors” can be found at gaylesbiantimes.com. □

arity, unity in struggle

among immigrants and Black and white working-class communities. The repression against immigrants is intensifying against the Muslim community, and the movement has to come out at ground zero on Sept. 11.”

Fight for ‘the right to live better’

Gutierrez said the issues for all workers are the same: “Unite to fight for jobs, unite against homelessness. We want schools not jails for our youth.”

Julie Fry, representing the youth in the March 4th Coalition, said, “There is an international and national attack on students: raising tuition, laying off teachers, increasing class size, with no end in sight.” She stressed the need for all workers to take part Oct. 7 in the National Day of Action to Defend Public Education.

Charles Jenkins, an organizer of the Million Worker March and a member of the steering Committee of the New York May 1 Coalition, echoed the need for unity

between immigrants and the Black community. “The MWM and May 1 did something historic because we knew we had to unite. We have the right to live better than we have lived before. Working-class youth deserve a future.” Jenkins encouraged people to go to the Oct. 2 rally in Washington, D.C., to fight for jobs. “We must leave here with one voice, the voice of the working class,” he said.

Christine Williams, a Transit Workers union organizer, echoed the call for unity and action. “Fire the MTA [Metropolitan Transit Authority]! That’s our motto! Wall Street bankers and real estate tycoons are out to cut services and raise fares. The disabled are going to be without buses.”

Ramon Jimenez, running for New York state attorney general on the Freedom Party ticket, said, “We stand with the Band of Brothers in their fight against racism.” He noted that Andrew Cuomo, New York Democratic gubernatorial candidate, “boldly says he’s going to cut pro-



WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

Aug. 21 forum at the Solidarity Center.

grams. He would save Wall Street, not the workers. We won’t be on the defensive — we have to act! Tax the banks!”

Armando Robles of the United Electrical Workers Local 1110 in Chicago led the workers who occupied and took over the Republic Windows and Doors factory in December. He noted: “We learned how to

fight. We never lost our hope. Civil disobedience does not mean cooperation with the police.” Robles’ advice: “Just occupy!”

Carlos Rovira from the Movimiento de Independiente Trabajadores was the last speaker. “We have reason to celebrate,” he concluded, “We are creating a movement.” □

Reactionary judge halts embryonic stem cell research

By Gene Clancy

For millions of people with Parkinson's and other degenerative and incurable diseases, a hope for a cure relies heavily on stem cell research.

But on Aug. 23, U.S. District Judge Royce Lamberth issued a major ruling against embryonic stem cell research. Lamberth decided that two business-people engaged in stem cell research were suffering from unfair competition. James Sherley of the Boston Biomedical Research Institute and Theresa Deisher of AVM Biotechnology had alleged that new guidelines for embryonic stem cell research issued by the Obama administration would result in increased competition for limited federal funding, and would "injure their ability to compete successfully for National Institutes of Health (NIH) stem cell research money." (Associated Press, Aug. 23)

Lamberth, a Reagan appointee with a long history of reactionary decisions, also ruled that the federal guidelines would hurt another plaintiff in the case, Night-light Christian Adoptions, because they might not be able to "adopt" as many frozen embryos as they would like. There are currently around 400,000 frozen embryos stored in U.S. fertility clinics. Night-light admitted to CBS News that they had successfully "adopted" only 250 frozen embryos since they started in 1998.

The "danger" to these plaintiffs was so great, according to Lamberth, that he ordered an immediate halt to all NIH efforts

to expand funding for embryonic stem cell research. He cited an amendment to a 1996 law which forbids any research which might destroy an embryo.

The judge, in his decision, did not consider the millions of people suffering from diseases, many of them terminal, who could be helped or cured by embryonic stem cell research.

Research on stem cells, especially those from early embryos, is especially promising because stem cells offer a way to turn back the biological clock. Current drugs can do no more than slow the progress of degenerative diseases such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.

Stem cells may one day replace cells and rebuild tissues, perhaps even organs, helping to restore patients to the way they were before they became ill. "Adult" (nonembryonic) stem cell research, while useful, has much more limited potential according to experts.

European researchers have identified muscle stem cells, suggesting a treatment for muscular dystrophy, according to a recent report published in the journal Nature. Among other tissues that could be repaired are those of the central nervous system and spinal cord, offering hope to millions who suffer from brain and spinal cord injuries and diseases. Recently, scientists at the NIH reported remarkable success in their research with embryonic stem cells.

The response to Judge Lamberth's outrageous decision was quick and angry. Although some researchers showed sur-

prise and dismay, groups representing the disabled and medical communities were loud in their denunciation of this attack on our very lives. Bob Schieffer of CBS News spoke passionately as a cancer survivor in favor of embryonic stem cell research and expressed his chagrin at the latest court ruling.

The Obama administration has said it will appeal the decision, but a much quicker solution is available to the current government if they choose to utilize it. In July 2006, before the Democrats got control of Congress, a bill permitting the federal funding of embryonic stem cell research passed both houses of Congress with bipartisan support.

Even such noted conservatives as Nancy Reagan and Sen. Orrin Hatch of Utah supported the bill. George W. Bush vetoed that bill, but presumably, with majorities in both houses, the Democrats could pass a bill which Obama would then sign. But this scenario is by no means certain.

Scientific progress under capitalism

It is a fact that the modern scientific revolution was a part of the revolution of the capitalist class against feudalism. It is also true that in its progressive phase, capitalism paved the way for many important breakthroughs in scientific knowledge. Many progressive people are therefore sometimes puzzled and dismayed by the recent rise of reactionary, obscurantist and downright anti-scientific movements by the Christian right in the U.S. and elsewhere.

David F. Noble, a college professor from Toronto, has asserted that as capitalism progressed through the 19th and into the 20th century, science and engineering came more and more under the control of large corporations.

The goal of these corporations was, of course, to maximize their profits, but as the 20th century progressed, these corporate "scientists" acquired the additional tasks of managing and defending the capitalist class. Scientific discovery only became important when it led to profits, but even profitable inventions could be sacrificed if they endangered capitalism economically or politically. (David F. Noble, *America by Design*, 1977)

The current worldwide economic crisis does indeed threaten the very foundations of capitalism. Different sectors of the capitalist class are torn between their desire to make potentially huge profits from stem cell research (there have already been successful attempts to patent individual genes!) and their need to maintain political control of the capitalist state. For conservatives in the United States, this has meant an alliance with the religious right, which is vehemently opposed to embryonic stem cell research.

The attack on science is a symptom of the long-range decline of capitalism, but workers and oppressed people, including sick and disabled people, need not accept it. We should see to it that scientific progress continues, not for profit, but to meet people's needs. □

Community fights to preserve dialysis treatment

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

Bulletin: As we go to press, the dialysis patients have gotten another reprieve. The dialysis providers have agreed to continue treatment while a more long-term arrangement is negotiated.

At a meeting chaired by DeKalb County Commissioner Larry Johnson on Aug. 31, officials from Grady Hospital, Emory University, Fresenius Medical Services and kidney care company DaVita stated that an agreement among them for extended care is almost completed and that the patients should keep their appointment schedules. Many of the terms being discussed were not revealed.

The Grady Coalition is going ahead with planned actions on Aug. 31 and Sept. 1 to underscore that health care is a human right for all.

Once again, poor immigrants suffering from kidney failure face a cutoff of their life-sustaining dialysis treatment. Grady Hospital had sent some 38 patients a letter informing them that Aug. 31 was the last day the cost of their treatments would be covered under a contract between the hospital and Fresenius, a for-profit business. Without dialysis three times a week, deadly toxins will build up in these patients' bodies, bringing about imminent death.

This nightmare began a year ago, when the privatized corporate board of directors of Atlanta's safety-net hospital ordered the closing of the outpatient dialysis clinic. With a closing date of Sept. 19, 2009, the patients were given three

options — return to their home country; move to another state that provided funding for chronic care for kidney patients; or begin paying a private provider. A fourth option was raised — to wait until the patient's toxin level was at dangerously high levels, and then go to an emergency room, be hospitalized until stable and then be sent home! Grady offered patients transportation money to leave the area.

In 2007, when the hospital was still a publicly operated facility, a similar attempt was made to shut the clinic down. Community opposition, organized by the Grady Coalition, prevented this attack on a life-or-death service needed by poor and uninsured people. In fact, the CEO who tried to ram through the closing was fired by the hospital's board, which chastised him for undermining the hospital's purpose.

Two years later, with the hospital privatized and a handful of influential business leaders now making decisions, the idea of eliminating the clinic resurfaced.

Once again, health care advocates, Grady doctors and nurses, students, faith leaders, elected officials, and the patients and their families organized press conferences and rallies in front of Grady Hospital. They crowded into board meeting rooms, where immigrant workers presented their stories of having lived and worked in the U.S. for years, of having children growing up in Atlanta and of the inaccessible or nonexistent dialysis facilities in countries such as Honduras, Ethiopia and Mexico.

Despite a temporary injunction and a lawsuit, the clinic was shut down on



PHOTO: ANGELA FLORES

Oct. 4, 2009. The closure impacted 91 patients, more than half of them undocumented immigrants. However, as a result of all the pressure, including national media coverage, Grady agreed to cover the cost of treatment for 51 people at for-profit clinics operated by Fresenius Medical Services until Jan. 3. The other 40 were eligible for Medicaid coverage.

As that deadline approached, community pressure forced a continuation of care. After another cutoff date was set for February, it was discovered that Grady had in fact signed a contract with Fresenius to treat Grady patients until September. The public cat-and-mouse game was intended to panic these critically ill patients into agreeing to leave the state.

At the outset of this human crisis, board Chairperson "Pete" Correll, a former CEO

of Georgia-Pacific and a major force in the corporate takeover of Grady, claimed, "We made a commitment. ... People are not going to die on the street because of these actions." (New York Times, Nov. 20)

However, at least nine of the ousted patients have died in the months since the clinic closed, including 23-year-old Ariana Ríos Fernández, who died on Nov. 28 in Durango, Mexico. The mother of two returned to Mexico, where each dialysis treatment cost \$118. Although her father sold everything he could and borrowed money, they could only afford two sessions a week. Her death was not tracked by Grady Hospital officials.

Members of the Grady Coalition are focusing on three key players in this unethical abandonment of ill patients — Emory

Continued on page 9

Interview with workers’ leader

Teachers strike in Puerto Rico

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

Tens of thousands of teachers in Puerto Rico held a one-day work stoppage Aug. 26 to protest the neoliberal Gov. Luis Fortuño’s offensive, which has left the island’s education system in shambles. This historic stoppage shut 90 percent of the island’s schools. Teachers showed great resistance, as the recent successful student strike of the University of Puerto Rico also did.

In its fierce war against the workers, the U.S.’s capitalist apparatus is targeting not only today’s working class but also the coming generations as it destroys the public educational system. This is more painfully true in the U.S.-dominated territory of Puerto Rico, where the breakdown of what should be the nurturing ground for a promising future is reaching criminal proportions.

Decades of neglect by past island administrations, vastly deepened by the current pro-U.S. governor, have left school buildings crumbling, books and other material resources scarce, teachers laid off and poorly paid while their workload increases, and art, physical and special education programs cancelled allegedly to solve the financial crisis. This is all done on behalf of private contractors or corpo-

rations, who will then “save” the whole system after it collapses.

Students and now teachers are resisting. Under the slogan, “1,500 schools, one teachers’ sector,” members of the Puerto Rican Federation of Teachers (FMPR), the Puerto Rican Teachers’ Association (AMPR), Educamos and the National Union of Education Educators and Workers (UNETE) closed ranks and effectively stopped the school day throughout the island.

Some 30,000 teachers out of a total of 40,000 actively participated. The FMPR initiated the call, which was rapidly picked up and supported by the AMPR, Educamos and UNETE. These last three organizations held a joint press conference on August 22 announcing their support for the one-day strike.

Interview with workers’ leader

Workers World spoke with Eva Ayala, president of Educamos, on Aug. 30. Ayala is a kindergarten teacher in the inland town of Comerio. WW asked her what the most important demands were, about the impact of the strike and what the next step in the struggle would be.

Ayala demanded that the government “immediately provide the human resources our students need and work with

the teachers who were categorized as surplus since these teachers are actually permanent. Many of them are being shifted from school to school, violating their seniority rights.

“Reactivate the Committees of School Organization because these allow for the active participation of teachers, parents and students in the process of nomination of teachers and the process of identification of the resources needed in every school of the island. The current Department of Education has paralyzed these committees.

“Revise the policy with respect to the teachers of health, arts and physical and special education, so that those resources that have been eliminated in most schools because the Education Department says that they are not necessary get reactivated because we think that that will extend the services for our students.

“Another important demand is the elimination of the 60-minute class period and a return to 50 minutes because otherwise the students get shortchanged and will only get basic subjects like science, math, Spanish, social studies and English, not allowing for enough time to take other elective subjects like arts, physical education, etc.,” said Ayala.

“A major demand is also the elimination of the supervision of the school by agents foreign to the educational system. The government wants to contract private companies to direct our schools, stating that the schools have not met the expectations of the Puerto Rican people. We are against privatization because these companies have been taking school funds without improving the students’ learning.

“Because of these policies, the program of special education is in limbo and our students are not receiving the health services they need.”

Regarding the strike’s impact, Ayala said, “It was a lesson to the government since Fortuño and the education secretary thought that we were incapable of hitting the streets. Traditionally, there would only be 1,000 to 2,000 teachers who would go out on strike, depending on which union called for the stoppage, but contrary to the past, this time all the teachers’ sectors walked off the job and the response was resounding.”

Ayala added that the next step needed is to continue organizing in every place and at every level “developing a broader process where parents are an essential part, and they realize that this is not just a one-day action.” □

IAC forms Latin America-Caribbean Solidarity Committee

The International Action Center has announced the formation of the Latin America-Caribbean Solidarity Committee. The committee has already begun planning a number of events in solidarity with the National Popular Resistance Front (FNRP) of Honduras.

The LA-CSC was initiated by IAC activists who focus on the region and pay particular attention to struggles against U.S. imperialism. These activists have a long history of solidarity with the struggles of their sisters and brothers to the South.

LA-CSC members have traveled to

Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Puerto Rico and Venezuela on solidarity missions. They have then organized meetings and street actions, written books and newspaper articles, and produced videos to get the word out about what they have witnessed and the people and communities they have met.

The formation of the LA-CSC is a big step forward in strengthening the work of IAC activists and friends.

Contact the LA-CSC at iacenter@iacenter.org (English) or iac-cai@iacenter.org (Spanish).

— Michael Kramer

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University, whose medical students train at Grady and which opened three dialysis clinics within months of the shuttering of the Grady clinic; Fresenius Medical Services, a giant, highly profitable, multinational corporation with dozens of facilities throughout metro Atlanta; and Grady Hospital, whose CEO Michael Young received a \$290,800 bonus on top of his \$615,000 salary for cutting costs and bringing about a \$34 million surplus in 2009. On Aug. 25 and Aug. 26, the Grady Coalition held demonstrations at Emory University, at a Fresenius facility and in front of Grady Hospital with signs declaring, “Don’t let them die!”

For months, efforts have been made by DeKalb County Commissioner Larry Johnson and community activists to gain agreement from Fresenius, Emory and other dialysis centers to provide pro bono care for these particular patients.

However, as critical as this short-term need is, the Grady Coalition also demands treatment for all those poor, uninsured and underinsured who are just being diagnosed with renal failure. What are they to do and where can they go when dialysis is a profit-making business? The corporate board claims that the mission of Grady Hospital to serve the poor is intact. Without outpatient dialysis care available, that is a death-causing lie. □

Miami youth sing: ‘Happy birthday Fidel!’

By Michael Martinez
Miami

It was a hot summer night, like most regular humid evenings in South Florida. Most people who are familiar with Miami would be surprised to find themselves in the midst of a crowd of young people singing, “Happy birthday” to Cuban socialist leader Fidel Castro. “Happy birthday Fidel. Happy birthday Fidel. Happy birthday Fidel Castro. Happy birthday to you!”

We celebrated Fidel’s birthday that Aug. 14 night at the grand opening of The Underground Railroad, the city’s newest poetry hangout. No, it was not just a case of “Saturday night fever.” Instead, it’s a clear indication of the changes brewing in the Cuban community here.

Scores of youth expressed their solidarity with the Cuban revolution and praised its rebel commander, who had just turned 84 years old the night before. Poet after poet took the floor that night, filling the hall with spoken word poetry full of audacious verses and conscious rhymes, reflecting the radicalization occurring among the young people of today. The angry words pierced the night, retelling tales of the horrors of capitalism: imperialist wars, foreclosures, unemployment, police brutality, lack of health care and no opportunities to advance or attend college.

The venue’s host, Malik Shabaaz, a Nuyorican poet who has been a popular fixture in Miami’s spoken word scene for almost a decade, set the mood. Malik is an activist with the Republic of New Africa (RNA) and the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (NCOBRA).

Shabaaz was born to a Puerto Rican family in New York’s South Bronx. His father joined the Nation of Islam — inspired by the teachings of Malcolm X.

Under the stage name “Prophet,” Shabaaz recites with fiery diction and wit, easily conveying his message of Puerto



Rican independence and overall revolutionary change to the audience with persuasive and passionate lines. As coordinator of the open mic, Prophet has offered Miami FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together) a weekly spot on the program and has given the youth organization a platform to reach out and introduce the ideas of Marx, Lenin and Che to those who show up and spend the evening.

Revolutionary-minded youth of all types made up the fervent audience and included members of Iraq Veterans Against the War and its national chairperson, Camilo Mejía. Many ideas on how to overthrow the profit-driven system of exploitation were exchanged, including a segment discussing the term “white supremacy” and what those words meant to everyone present.

Far from being a one-time event, this new poetry spot is programmed for every Saturday night starting at 8 p.m. and opened its doors just in time for the “back to school” season, attracting college and high school age working-class youth, even though it was noted that many could not afford the tuition and costs necessary to go back to school this year.

Martinez is an organizer with Miami FIST.

"With the capitalist system demonstrably unfair, it is useful, indeed refreshing, to see a Marxist analysis of globalization and its effects on working people. Fred Goldstein does exactly that."

—Howard Zinn, author of
A People's History of the United States

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Iraq’s resistance stands up

From the point of view of the U.S. government and the Pentagon, the U.S. has begun to wind down its military occupation of Iraq, now in the middle of its eighth year. But Washington intends to keep control of Iraq’s oil and foreign policy with a string of military bases, a supersized embassy complete with its own mercenary army, and a puppet government dependent on U.S. military, economic and diplomatic backing.

In the meantime these seven-plus years of occupation have destroyed much of Iraq, slaughtering its people and devastating its culture and its scientific and technical leadership. The occupation has divided Iraq along ethnic and sectarian fault lines as never before, and it left the city of Falluja poisoned with cancer-producing substances.

That the U.S. invasion has brought much pain and suffering to Iraq is indisputable. What is missing from the above picture, however, is one essential thing: the indomitable determination of the Iraqi people and nation to regain their sovereignty.

With U.S. troops leaving the country or staying safely within their well-protected bases, elements apparently from the Iraqi resistance launched 34 attacks

in 16 cities on Aug. 25. Some 31 of the 55 people killed were members of the puppet police and security forces. It was clear that the Iraqi resistance that had prevented the U.S. from a clean takeover of Iraq is still around, still a force on the ground. More cities were hit at the same time than had ever been hit before, with police headquarters, checkpoints and government offices being the main targets.

Soon after the initial U.S.-British occupation in April 2003, George Bush claimed “mission accomplished.” The fighting seemed over, but soon this illusion became a nightmare. Former army officers and many others grouped fighters around themselves who began to make life hell for the occupation army. The vast majority of Iraqis would simply not submit to imperialist rule.

President Barack Obama, who was elected partly based on his promise to leave Iraq, is on the verge of making a speech on Aug. 31 to the county explaining the withdrawal. The early word on Obama’s speech is that the president will avoid the triumphant tone that got Bush into trouble. But no amount of intelligent words can cover up a policy of military aggression that has left the U.S. with only enemies and ineffective puppets in Iraq. □

Workers need program to fight ‘double-dip’ threat

Continued from page 1

bers. In July, 51.1 percent of workers between the ages of 16 and 24 were unemployed. African-American, Latino/a and Asian youth have been hit hardest.

Overall, in July there were five unemployed workers for every job opening available. In other words, there were no jobs at all for 80 percent of the 15 million officially unemployed workers.

No economic revival in sight

This is what the capitalist “recovery” has looked like. It has been a profit recovery for the capitalists and a jobless recovery for the workers.

As bad as it has been for the workers, statistics show that after a year of government attempts to pump up a failing capitalist system, economic growth is declining, investment is declining, lending is declining, and the economy is headed for a new contraction.

This is a strong indication that the system as a whole has reached a failed state. The times when capitalism bounced back after a crisis may very well be a thing of the past. Workers should not expect things to revive on their own.

While the bosses are worrying about how many millions and billions of dollars they will have left after another crisis, the workers — even those who still have jobs — need to worry about survival.

The only way to survive another crisis is to stop the bosses from unloading it onto our backs.

Bosses on a hiring strike

The capitalists are on a hiring strike. They won’t hire. They are sitting on \$1.8 trillion in cash, but they refuse to invest because they’re worried that they won’t

make a profit, even though last year their profits amounted to \$1.2 trillion, more than they were raking in before the crisis.

Every nickel of that money represents wealth created by the workers. It ends up in the hands of the capitalists because they own all the factories, offices, mines, stores and the rest of the economy.

How did the bosses “recover” from the first phase of this crisis? Not by creating new industries or expanding existing industries. They recovered their profits by laying off workers, cutting wages and speeding up those who were left on the job.

Take the auto industry, which is central to the economy. It came back to life when General Motors, Ford and Chrysler shut down dozens of plants, laid off hundreds of thousands of workers and forced two-tier contracts on the union, so that new hires now earn only \$14 an hour. Other industries shrank their operations in similar fashion.

Profitability was restored by getting more and more production out of fewer and fewer workers, who were paid lower wages. If you do the math, it is a fairly easy capitalist equation. Produce more and more. Lay off more and more. Cut wages more and more.

But then what happens? Soon you cannot sell any more at a profit because the workers are broke. Then come more layoffs and shutdowns. This is the way capitalism works.

The working class, the communities, the youth and students need a program to combat the threat of a renewed crisis. There must be a fight for a moratorium on layoffs, shutdowns and wage cuts.

There can be a struggle for a shorter workweek at no cut in pay. And there can be a campaign to force the government in

MICHIGAN

Anti-war student targeted by FBI

By Megan Spencer
East Lansing, Mich.

Ahlam Mohsen, the 22-year-old Michigan State University student and anti-war activist arrested for throwing a pie at U.S. Sen. Carl Levin, is now the subject of an FBI investigation and faces possible federal charges of assaulting a member of Congress.

On Aug. 16, during a Mecosta County Democrats meeting in Big Rapids, Mich., Mohsen threw an apple pie at Levin after anti-war activist Max Kantar read a statement accusing the senator of war crimes as chair of the Armed Services Committee. Levin was targeted for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq as well as continued U.S. funding of Israel’s war against the Palestinian people.

Mohsen was arrested and held on a quarter-million-dollar bond at the Mecosta County Jail, where she faced felony charges of stalking and assault. She reportedly was the victim of racist epithets at the jail because of her Arab background and was also denied food that met her dietary requirements as a vegan.

The Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice organized a protest Aug. 20 in Detroit that received widespread media coverage around the state, including Big Rapids, where Mohsen was incarcerated. A Facebook support page quickly grew to include hundreds of people, many of whom called Levin’s office and the Mecosta County prosecutor to demand that all charges be dropped and that Mohsen be freed from jail.

After pressure from her supporters, Mohsen was released Aug. 24 on a reduced bail, after a Mecosta County district judge decided to suspend the state charges against her while the FBI investigates and decides whether to charge her with a federal crime of assaulting a member of Congress. (Detroit Free Press, Aug. 25)

Mohsen’s supporters have noted that no FBI investigation was commenced nor charges ever brought upon racist right-wing zealots who spat on members of the



Ahlam Mohsen

Congressional Black Caucus during the health care reform debate. Apparently a federal criminal charge like the one facing Mohsen only occurs when it’s done as a form of anti-war protest.

The potential charges Mohsen faces indicate a significant attack by both the state and the federal government on free speech and the right of the people to protest injustices. The state is trying to use fear and intimidation to prevent the people from holding elected officials accountable for the consequences of their deeds regarding war.

Mohsen’s brave actions have drawn attention to the fact that the U.S. continues to inflict violent injustices upon the people of the Middle East and other oppressed groups throughout the world. It is imperative that the people stand with her and insist that all charges against her be dropped immediately.

Supporters are urgently encouraged to take action to ensure that justice is won for Ahlam Mohsen:

Contact Sen. Carl Levin’s office and demand that all charges and the federal investigation against Mohsen be dropped immediately. Phone Levin at 313-226-6020; fax 313-226-6948; or e-mail by going to <http://levin.senate.gov/contact/>.

Call the Mecosta County Prosecutor’s Office directly at 231-592-0141 and demand that all charges against Mohsen be dropped in full. □

Washington to implement a jobs program — like the Works Progress Administration, which provided jobs for 8 million workers during the Great Depression.

Demand a government jobs program

The government has trillions of dollars. If it can spend \$1.25 trillion to buy toxic assets from the banks, it can spend that much to create a jobs program so that every unemployed worker can get a government-created job. Right now the Federal Reserve is planning to spend \$1 trillion buying government bonds. Instead, that trillion should go to a direct jobs program.

We can get it, but only if we fight for it. A national jobs program, open to all the unemployed, could carry out the multitude of tasks that the profit system has left undone. It could also initiate new programs. The government could use the existing skills of workers and provide training in new skills.

Demand shorter workweek, no cut in pay

By not hiring, the bosses and bankers are carrying out a virtual general strike of capital against labor. When workers go on strike, the bosses get injunctions, hire scabs and starve workers out in a war against our class.

It is high time for workers to fight to get their jobs back, to stop the layoffs and workplace closings and see that everyone who needs a job has one, at a living wage with full benefits.

Workers have to insist that a job is a right. The bosses say they cannot hire because there is no work. But since they have found ways to increase production, it is only just that the workers should benefit from this. If the workweek were reduced with no reduction in pay, then workers could benefit from the increased revenue.

The increased revenue should be used to add jobs and shifts instead of increasing profits. Millions of workers could be put to work under such a formula. Workers would have paychecks and could buy what they need.

The labor movement should revive and fight for some version of the old union slogan, “30 for 40,” meaning 30 hours’ work for 40 hours’ pay. □

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South African teachers, health workers on strike

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Some 1.3 million workers in the Republic of South Africa walked off the job on Aug. 18 after talks with the government collapsed. The government failed to meet their demands for an 8.6 percent increase in wages and a housing allowance of \$170 per month.

President Jacob Zuma of the ruling African National Congress has ordered his top-level ministers to return to the negotiating table with a mandate to work out a settlement to end the strike. The government has offered a 7 percent wage increase and a \$94 housing allowance.

Other sectors of the economy may soon be impacted. Unions representing mining and retail are threatening to join the South African Democratic Teachers Union and the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union.

The strike has closed down schools throughout the country and severely hampered the ability of hospitals and other public health services to function. The government ordered the military into the hospitals to provide basic services and to handle maintenance.

Mass demonstrations by the striking workers and other unions initially resulted in clashes between the police and protesters. The strike has escalated the debate over economic policy within the Tripartite Alliance, composed of the ruling ANC, the Congress of South African Trade Unions — to which both SADTU and NEHAWU are affiliated — and the South African Communist Party.

Membership and leadership in the Tripartite Alliance overlap. The general secretaries of the ANC and COSATU are also leading members of the SACP.

COSATU welcomed Zuma's new initiative to settle the strike. It said in a statement Aug. 30: "The federation hopes that an improved offer will now be tabled and that the strike can be settled as quickly as possible, through an agreement that is acceptable to the workers." (Mail & Guardian)

Zuma is concerned about the long-term implications of the strike. His government relied heavily on the trade unions to secure its overwhelming victory in the 2009 national elections, which brought the current administration to power with a mandate to increase public spending and directly address the concerns of the working class.

Other unions pledge to join strike

A number of unions have pledged to join the strike in a one-day solidarity action scheduled for Sept. 2 if there is no resolution of the workers' demands. The National Union of Mineworkers, one of the largest industrial organizations in the country, issued a statement Aug. 27 saying it would temporarily stop work if a settlement is not reached.

"The NUM fully supports the public sector strike and would next week Thursday ensure that every mining operation, every construction site and every energy worker join the public sector strike in different forms. Mineworkers are angry that when ... the public sector workers ask for a mere pittance, they are met with resistance and threatened with dismissals by

those in power." (cosatu.org.za)

This statement of solidarity from NUM coincides with other labor struggles taking place within various sectors of the economy, which is the most industrialized in Africa. The National Union of Metalworkers in South Africa, which represents 70,000 people employed in garages, workshops and automotive sectors, held a march Aug. 28 in the city of Sandton. The march was designed to pressure the bosses in the motor industry to agree to the workers' demands for wage increases and improved employment conditions.

Unions representing workers in the retail industry have also threatened to strike against the lowering of wages and the decline in working conditions. The South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union announced its participation in the Sept. 2 general strike if the dispute is not settled. In an Aug. 30 statement, SACCAWU said: "The Union has observed and experienced some disturbing trends in Industrial Relations within the wholesale and retail sector over the last few years. ... 'Walmartization' has now entered a new phase characterized by super-profit-driven unilateral restructuring, unilateral termination of collective agreements as well as an intransigent attitude which rears its ugly head during wage negotiations. ...

"Union members within the wholesale and retail sectors are more than ready to take the bull by its horns as they are no longer prepared to tolerate arrogance that has been displayed by various employers who treat workers and the Union with contempt in their drive for super-profits." (cosatu.org.za)

In several Eastern Cape cities, a strike against Kentucky Fried Chicken Corp. has been ongoing since Aug. 19.

Policy debates continue amid global economic crisis

The current labor strife in South Africa has intensified debate within the various organizations that led the national democratic revolution to power in 1994. The former racist apartheid regime collapsed as a result of popular, armed and labor struggles from 1976 to 1994.

SACP General Secretary and Minister of Higher Education Blade Nzimande commented Aug. 29 in response to the current strike that "The wage gap in the public sector between the highest paid and the lowest paid is 91 to one." (Mail & Guardian) Nzimande called for the government and the public sector unions to resolve the strike as soon as possible so that economic policy issues can be addressed on a national level.

Meanwhile, President Zuma has returned from a state visit to the People's Republic of China where high-level discussions resulted in the strengthening of relations between the ANC and the Communist Party of China.

Various African states have increased their ties with the PRC amid the worsening economic crisis facing the capitalist world. As the decline in employment and wages continues in both the Western industrialized countries and the underdeveloped regions of the world, workers and the oppressed will seek alternatives to the imperialist states in both international trade and domestic policy. □

Haiti's elections won't relieve misery

By **G. Dunkel**

Hundreds of thousands of Haitians have been living in misery for more than seven months — without houses, jobs, sanitation, potable water or electricity. The lucky ones have tents for shelter, others only tarps or sheets.

There are 1,370 officially recognized camps where more than 1.7 million people live, according to the Camp Management Coordinating Cluster. Fewer than 10,000 have been moved out to a new camp, but it is isolated and on barren ground without trees, grass, stores or shops. Its single hurricane shelter, according to a July Al-Jazeera Fault Line program, is flimsy and far too small.

The Autonomous Federation of Haitian Unions on Aug. 23 denounced the increased exploitation of the small number of workers who still have jobs. Employers are ignoring labor laws that regulate overtime, hours and minimum rates of pay and are supposed to protect the rights of laid-off workers. (Haïti-Liberté, Aug. 25-31)

The major new problem for the people in camps, according to a number of Haitian community groups, is that private landlords, claiming they own the land on which the camps are built, are forcibly evicting them. About one-fifth of camp residents have been evicted. The landlord's thugs often give no notice and demand people leave in a few hours.

Deeds to land in Haiti were problematic even before the earthquake, which destroyed most records. The Haitian government is reluctant to use eminent do-

main to block the evictions.

The government is also having a great deal of difficulty obtaining land to dump debris; private landlords don't want to give up vacant land. They are betting on a tourist boom in Port-au-Prince, based on what Finance Minister Ronald Beaudin said in a July press conference: "Port-au-Prince will have electricity 24 hours a day, will have many big hotels, with luxurious houses facing the sea."

In the midst of all this suffering and chaos, the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission has decided to spend \$30 million on an election in November. The IHRC, which makes all major financial decisions for the Haitian government, is co-chaired

by former U.S. President Bill Clinton and Jean-Max Bellerive, Haiti's prime minister. Half its members are foreign donors.

How the government will register and identify the nearly 2 million Haitians who have lost their homes and documents hasn't been addressed.

The IHRC is calling for hurricane shelters for 400,000 people — about one-quarter of the people in the camps — to be built by November. That's when the hurricane season will be over.

The power that the U.S. has over the IHRC and Haiti's finances has led many Haitian progressives and radicals to say that the U.S. has established a neocolony in Haiti.

With the country occupied by U.N. forces and the people facing chaos, the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) has disqualified 15 of the 34 candidates running for president. The CEP still won't even accept an application from Fanmi Lavalas, the party of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and the most popular in Haiti.

Wyclef Jean, the rap star, was one of the candidates disqualified, supposedly because he didn't meet a residency requirement. Jean had told the Haitian press, "Don't worry, I'm not a populist, I'm a capitalist." (Ezili Danto's blog, Aug. 29) Jean's candidacy has been the major story in the imperialist media. □

Detroiters protest top war maker

Protesters denounced Admiral Mike Mullen Aug. 26 at Wayne State University in Detroit. Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Mullen is the highest-ranking military officer in the U.S. He was speaking at a town hall meeting at the Community Arts Auditorium on WSU's main campus about programs allegedly helping returning veterans. Mullen was also attempting to drum up more support and funds for imperialist wars.

Members of the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice and other anti-war and progressive organizations chanted slogans such as "Money for cities, not for war," "Bring the troops home now," "Money for veterans not for war," and "Money for education not for war."

After a picketline, several protesters spoke out against ongoing U.S. wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran and Colombia. Speakers included WSU students, labor and community activists and Congressperson John Conyers, who was on his way to the town hall forum.

— Report and photo by **Bryan G. Pfeifer**



Lo que realmente debería asustar a Robert Gibbs Lucha de clases y el sistema bipartidista

Por David Sole

Cuando el secretario de prensa de la Casa Blanca, Robert Gibbs criticó el “ala izquierda” del Partido Demócrata el 10 de agosto durante una entrevista con The Hill, se armó una tormenta. Él se centró en lo que calificó como comentaristas “profesionales de izquierda” a quienes acusó de querer el “cuidado de salud de Canadá” y “eliminar el Pentágono”. (The-hill.com)

Gibbs, aunque no cedió en su ataque, admitió que “nació de la frustración”. Algunos en la prensa lo llamaron “iracundo”. Entrevistado en MSNBC el 11 de agosto, el representante demócrata Alan Grayson de la Florida llamó a Gibbs “el Portavoz payaso”. Sin embargo, ninguno de los artículos sobre la explosión de Gibbs llegó al meollo de la cuestión. El Partido Demócrata se compone de dos clases. Su base está formada por sindicatos, las llamadas “minorías” y los/as pobres — la clase obrera. Pero la dirección está firmemente en manos de los bancos y las corporaciones — la clase dominante capitalista.

A medida que la economía se deteriora, un conflicto crece entre estas dos clases. A la larga, este conflicto dividirá al Partido Demócrata. Gibbs no es cualquiera. Él ha estado trabajando con el presidente Barack Obama desde el 2004. Como portavoz de la prensa de la Casa Blanca él está en el círculo interno de las discusiones del Partido Demócrata.

Es evidente que la administración Obama está sintiendo presión por no cumplir sus promesas de poner fin a las guerras. Pese a las declaraciones de que se están terminando las operaciones de combate en Irak, este país aún no tiene un gobierno que funciona y los ataques militares por la resistencia continúan. Y más tropas estadounidenses están yendo hacia Afganistán mientras aumentan las bajas estadounidenses y las muy publicitadas operaciones de contrainsurgencia se han paralizado.

Crisis económica y el sistema bipartidista

De mayor amenaza para la administración, es la continuación de la crisis económica dentro de los EEUU. A pesar de un corto repunte en las ganancias de los bancos y los empresarios, la crisis de desempleo sigue aplastando a la población de clase trabajadora. Las ejecuciones hipotecarias de viviendas están en niveles récord. El supuesto proyecto de ley para la reforma del cuidado de la salud se ve más y más como un regalo a la industria farmacéutica y la industria del cuidado de la salud con fines de lucro.

El que Gibbs, hablando por Obama y el montón de demócratas de Wall Street se sienta malhumorado, sólo refleja hasta

qué punto están fuera de contacto con las decenas de millones de familias trabajadoras que sufren. No pueden entender por qué las migajas que han lanzado a las masas no puedan satisfacer a esos miserables ingratos.

Sin embargo, Gibbs no estaba muy preocupado. No quiso pedir disculpas y cuando se le preguntó en una rueda de prensa de la Casa Blanca, dijo que estaba seguro de que los “liberales” todavía votarían por los demócratas. Aunque no lo dijo directamente, él cree que no tienen otra opción.

Es cierto que EEUU es visto como un sistema de dos partidos. Tanto demócratas como republicanos recaudan y gastan cientos de millones de dólares para sus campañas más importantes. Los medios de comunicación también están tan apegados al sistema capitalista que rara vez cubren la candidatura progresista de un tercer partido. Pero la historia ha demostrado que incluso este monopolio bipartidista es vulnerable en períodos de gran crisis económica y social.

El “conflicto irreprimible” entre el Sur esclavista y el emergente Norte capitalista estalló una y otra vez desde los años de 1800. El Partido Whig represaba a los capitalistas del norte y a los agricultores. Se estableció con firmeza contra el Partido Demócrata, dominado por los propietarios de esclavos. Los Whigs tenían su propia “ala izquierdista”, como los Whigs de Massachusetts liderado por Charles Sumner que estaban fuertemente en contra de la esclavitud. Pero el Partido Whig en su conjunto los contenía y mantenía una política moderada y con concesiones hacia la esclavitud del Sur. En definitiva, el Partido Whig no pudo contener el creciente conflicto de clases.

En 1854 el Partido Republicano nació con la afluencia de muchas corrientes diversas — abolicionistas, ‘free soilers’ (organización opuesta al uso de territorio estadounidense para la esclavitud), ‘temperance activists’, (activistas pro abstención al uso de bebidas alcohólicas), elementos disidentes del partido Whig y otros. Seis años más tarde los republicanos tomaron la Casa Blanca. Por supuesto, la elección en sí misma no podía poner fin a la lucha de clases. Era sólo una indicación del estado de ánimo de las masas. La elección precipitó la Guerra Civil, que resolvió, a través de sangre y trueno, la cuestión de clase de que si los propietarios de esclavos o los capitalistas dirigirían el país. El otrora poderoso Partido Whig desapareció.

Otro movimiento de un tercer partido político que casi descarriló al sistema de dos partidos en los EEUU fue el Partido del Pueblo (populistas) de la década de 1890. Este partido estaba basado en la ira de los propietarios de pequeñas empre-

sas y pequeños agricultores, a veces en alianza con los trabajadores industriales, contra el crecimiento de los grandes bancos y su mano opresiva, las corporaciones monopolistas, sobre todo del sector de los ferrocarriles.

El movimiento del Partido del Pueblo quedó impedido por su incapacidad general de pronunciarse sobre el racismo. Se descarriló por completo cuando rindió su independencia y apoyó la candidatura del Partido Demócrata de William Jennings Bryan en las elecciones de 1896. A la larga, estaba condenado al fracaso, puesto que se basaba en la reducida influencia de la clase social de empresas pequeñas y de la clase campesina, que estaban perdiendo importancia en la economía.

Hoy, cualquier desafío al capitalismo debe ser dirigido por la clase trabajadora que incluya a las naciones oprimidas - africana americana, latina, nativa y otras dentro de los EEUU. El conflicto de clases entre las dos clases principales no puede ser ocultado para siempre. Fue sólo el surgimiento de los Estados Unidos como el principal explotador imperialista del mundo después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial que permitió a los capitalistas distribuir suficientes migajas a los sindicatos industriales y otros, para elevar el nivel de vida promedio por varias décadas dentro de este país. Esto les compró a los empresarios paz entre las clases en el país y despolitizó a la clase obrera en gran medida durante las siguientes décadas.

El estándar de vida promedio en EEUU ha venido disminuyendo constantemente desde 1972. Pero ha tenido un desarrollo desigual; los/as más pobres, los/as trabajadores/as no sindicalizados/as, los/as recipientes de asistencia social y los/as desempleados/as han venido perdiendo más al principio. Pero paso a paso, los capitalistas han ampliado la opresión.

Hoy en día vemos el declive de los sindicatos, otrora grandes, de la industria automovilista, de acero, de caucho, etc. Donde todavía quedan empleos (y millones de estos se han perdido por las contrataciones al exterior y la deslocalización de puestos de trabajo), los salarios son a menudo la mitad de lo que eran antes. Con la actual crisis económica, el impulso para reducir el nivel de vida de la clase obrera se está acelerando.

La ampliación de la lucha contra el capitalismo

Este es el problema con que los grandes jefes del Partido Demócrata se están enfrentando cuando atacan a su ala izquierda. Es un problema que no pueden arreglar. Es inherente al sistema capitalista.

La mayoría de los/as dirigentes sindicales y muchos/as activistas de los derechos civiles siguen siendo leales al Partido Demócrata. No tienen ninguna intención

de retirarse, sobre todo porque la mayoría no tiene conocimiento del marxismo o de un análisis político clasista. Pero la presión de sus miembros y sus constituyentes está creciendo y sienten que deben responder. Lo que intentan, y lo que desatan pueden ser cosas muy diferentes.

Un acontecimiento significativo surgió recientemente cuando el veterano líder de los derechos civiles, el reverendo Jesse Jackson, se reunió con el nuevo presidente del sindicato United Auto Workers Internacional Bob King, para anunciar la marcha por “Trabajos, Justicia y Paz” en Detroit del 28 de agosto.

Los documentos de planificación del liderazgo del UAW demandan finalizar las guerras de Irak y Afganistán y usar el dinero para los servicios sociales necesarios en EEUU. También demandan una moratoria en las ejecuciones hipotecarias, una demanda iniciada y por la cual se ha luchado en Detroit durante los últimos tres años por la Coalición Moratoria ¡AHORA! El UAW, junto a otros sindicatos de Michigan, está poniendo mucho esfuerzo y recursos en esta iniciativa. También está involucrando a otras organizaciones comunitarias orientadas al activismo.

Mientras los máximos líderes de este esfuerzo lo ven principalmente como una manera de registrar más votantes al Partido Demócrata y para influir en las elecciones de noviembre, el Rev. Jackson declaró que su objetivo es también impulsar una agenda “urbana” de empleos, en contra de ejecuciones hipotecarias, para poner fin a las guerras, etc., por la cual las masas de desempleados/as, estudiantes y trabajadores/as pueden empezar a luchar.

Además de la marcha de Detroit, la NAACP, en alianza con el liderazgo de la AFL-CIO nacional y otros, han convocado a una marcha masiva en Washington, DC, para el 2 de octubre.

Estas son las cosas que deben preocupar a Gibbs, Obama y Wall Street. Por primera vez en mucho tiempo, sindicatos poderosos están haciendo una alianza con grupos comunitarios de base amplia, con un programa de reivindicaciones para la clase obrera.

No es en la arena electoral donde la lucha de clases estará luchada mayormente, sino en las calles y en los lugares de trabajo. Las tensiones dentro del Partido Demócrata son sólo un reflejo débil de las luchas reales, poderosas e inevitables que no pueden y no serán reprimidas por mucho tiempo.

Sole es un activista sindical desde hace mucho tiempo y ex presidente del UAW 2334 en Detroit. Es un líder del Comité de Emergencia de Michigan contra la Guerra y la Injusticia.



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¿Quiénes son los Cinco Cubanos?

Los Cinco Cubanos están cumpliendo largas e injustas sentencias en prisiones de EEUU por defender a su patria – Cuba – de grupos terroristas del exilio Cubano en Miami. Los Cinco Cubanos fueron arrestados en 1998 por monitorear las actividades de esos grupos violentos e informar a Cuba sobre sus planes. Por casi 12 años, estos cinco hombres han permanecido en priso-

nes de EEUU y como un castigo adicional, a dos de ellos se les ha negado el derecho humano básico de recibir visitas de sus esposas. Únase a personas de todas partes del mundo – parlamentarios, Premios Nobel, sindicalistas, activistas comunitarios – que se han pronunciado contra el injusto encarcelamiento de los Cinco Cubanos y continúan demandado su libertad. Para más información visite: www.thecuban5.org